

## CLAIMS

What is claimed is:

1. A method of connecting a device to a central system, comprising:  
5        detecting the insertion of a connector into a slot in said central system, wherein said connector is communicably connected to said device;  
         reading, through said slot, configuration information stored in a memory contained within said connector; and  
10        configuring said central system in response to said configuration information read from said memory contained within said connector.
2. The method of claim 1, wherein said configuration information  
15 includes information describing said device.
3. The method of claim 1, wherein said configuration information includes information describing at least one characteristic of a user of said device.  
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4. The method of claim 1, further comprising writing, by said central system, at least one characteristic of a user into said memory contained within said connector.
- 25 5. The method of claim 1, wherein said slot is one of a plurality of slots in said central system, and wherein said configuring comprises establishing a communication path between said slot and logic within said central system associated with said device.
- 30 6. The method of claim 3, wherein said at least one characteristic of said user of said device comprises an identity of said user,

wherein said configuring includes accessing at least one other characteristic of said user of said device in response to said identity of said user, and wherein said at least one other characteristic of said user is stored within and accessed from a memory in said central system.

7. The method of claim 3, wherein said configuring comprises configuring a speech recognition process within said central system in response to said at least one characteristic of said user.

8. The method of claim 7, wherein said device is a microphone.

9. The method of claim 1, wherein said device is an input device.

10. The method of claim 1, wherein said device is an output device.

11. The method of claim 1, further comprising providing said configuration information to a maintenance interface of said central system separate from said slot.

12. A system for interfacing a central system to a device, comprising:

detection logic for detecting the insertion of a connector into a slot in said central system, wherein said connector is communicably connected to said device;

configuration information reading logic for reading, through said slot, configuration information stored in a memory contained within said connector; and

configuration logic for configuring said central system in response to said configuration information read from said memory contained within said connector.

13. The system of claim 12, wherein said configuration information includes information describing said device.

5 14. The system of claim 12, wherein said configuration information includes information describing at least one characteristic of a user of said device.

10 15. The system of claim 12, further comprising configuration information writing logic for writing, by said central system, at least one characteristic of a user into said memory contained within said connector.

15 16. The system of claim 12, wherein said slot is one of a plurality of slots in said central system, and wherein said configuring logic is further operable to establish a communication path between said slot and logic within said central system associated with said device.

20 17. The system of claim 14, wherein said at least one characteristic of said user of said device comprises an identity of said user, wherein said configuration logic is operable to access at least one other characteristic of said user of said device in response to said identity of said user, and wherein said at least one other  
25 characteristic of said user is stored within and accessed from a memory in said central system.

30 18. The system of claim 14, wherein said configuration logic is further operable to configure a speech recognition process within said central system in response to said at least one characteristic of said user.

19. The system of claim 18, wherein said device is a microphone.

20. The system of claim 12, wherein said device is an input device.

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21. The system of claim 12, wherein said device is an output device.

22. The system of claim 12, further comprising maintenance logic for providing said configuration information to a maintenance interface  
10 of said central system separate from said slot.

23. A system for connecting a device to a central system, comprising:

means for detecting the insertion of a connector into a slot in  
15 said central system, wherein said connector is communicably connected to said device;

means for reading, through said slot, configuration information stored in a memory contained within said connector; and

means for configuring said central system in response to said  
20 configuration information read from said memory contained within said connector.

24. A connector for a device to be connected to a central system, comprising:

25 connector memory logic operable to store configuration data; and

connector logic operable to provide said configuration data through at least one pin of said connector to a central system following insertion of said connector into a receptacle in said  
30 central system.

25. The connector of claim 24, wherein said connector terminates a cable coupled to a device.

26. The connector of claim 25, wherein said device is an input  
5 device.

27. The connector of claim 25, wherein said device is an output device.

10 28. The connector of claim 24, wherein said connector memory logic is non-volatile.

29. The connector of claim 24, wherein said configuration data represents at least one operational characteristic of a device  
15 coupled to said connector.

30. The connector of claim 24, wherein said configuration data represents at least one use characteristic of a user of a device coupled to said connector.

20 31. The connector of claim 24, wherein said connector further comprises power logic operable to obtain power from said central system following said insertion of said connector into a receptacle in said central system.

25 32. The connector of claim 24, wherein said connector is an RJ-45 compatible connector.

30 33. A connector for a device to be connected to a central system, comprising:

means for storing configuration data; and

means for providing said configuration data through at least one pin of said connector to a central system following insertion of said connector into a receptacle in said central system.